

Honourable Minister, Your Worship, Members of the Board of Governors and the Senate, President Atkinson, Members of the platform party, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Bonjour, Sat Sri Akal, Namaste, Nee Haow, Annyong ha shimnikka, Nei Ho, Bienvenido, Salam aleykum.

These are some of the languages spoken in our Kwantlen community.

I want to thank the Board of Governors, the Nominating Committee, and the Kwantlen community for giving me the honour of being the first Chancellor of Kwantlen Polytechnic University. I am humbled by their show of confidence and trust

in my abilities. I accept this challenge with gratitude and enthusiasm.

I'm not sure if the enormity of this gesture has completely sunk in yet. After I had accepted the request to be the Chancellor, I tried to understand how I got to this point in my life. Very quickly, I began to understand that many people in my life's journey must take credit.

First my parents, who themselves had only a grade 5 and a grade 10 education. They instinctively knew that higher learning was important for the success of their children. More often than not, they had to borrow money from family and friends to provide this

opportunity. Being the youngest, I was fortunate that my elder siblings paved a path for me to follow.

My experience is probably no different than that of many others who have come to this country. We are all products of someone's dreams and aspirations. My life has been fortunate because of the help that I've received from a lot of wonderful people. Some of them are here today. Today belongs to them, as much as it does to me. I would like to introduce some of them to you:

- 1) Jess and Guddi Bubber, my brother and sister-in-law, who have provided unconditional support throughout my life.
- 2) Dr. Bikkar and Surjit Lalli, they are the parents that I was fortunate enough to call my own when I got married. Their community work is a source of inspiration for us all.

3) Amrita, who taught us humility and that life is precious.

4) Our children, Anju, Vikram, Priya and Rabani, and our nieces and nephews, and their families, they are our loudest cheerleaders. We love them dearly and are very proud of them. And,

5) Meena, my lovely wife, who has the great capacity to look past my flaws and to lift me when I falter.

Aside from my immediate family, there have been many friends who have provided wise counsel. I have accumulated friendships that span back more than fifty years and several continents. More recently, since moving to BC, I have made friends that have taught me more about generosity than I ever knew. Some of them

have helped to create the SPARK Education Foundation, an organization that supports non-traditional students.

While I recognize my family and friends, I'm also mindful of the work done by the pioneers who struggled to create a better future for all of us. I am grateful to them.

I came to Canada in 1976, a young man with high hopes of simply making a good living and raising my family. For the first 15 years I called Saskatchewan my home, and then BC.

What have I experienced and learned during this journey? Like everyone present here, I have experienced the positive: lasting friendships, adventure, opportunity, the freedom to participate and, I have experienced the difficult: sickness, loss of loved ones, and an uncertain future. I have learned to appreciate the

Canadian values of sharing one's good fortune for the welfare of others. People here are accepting of many cultures; they look for the good not only for themselves but for the whole community. This is a priceless quality.

Having received the benefits of a good education myself, it has become my passion in life to encourage others to do the same.

My association with Kwantlen began in 2001, when I was first appointed to the Board of Governors. During this time I have had the good fortune to work with many awe-inspiring individuals. I have learned that Canada has one of the best educational systems in the world, something that we can all be proud of.

Kwantlen has been a part of this tradition for 27 years. It has provided opportunities for students with all kinds of abilities and an environment that supports success. For this, we must

recognize the faculty, the staff, and the leadership provided by many individuals.

With a new name and a new mandate, Kwantlen will prepare our students for the global reach, with due respect to our traditions.

But, as we move forward, I am also left with the question,

“what about the 75% of the B.C. youth who do not attend or successfully complete a post-secondary program?” Their reasons may be varied: lack of academic preparation, poor motivation, cultural limitations, financial hardship, first generation students, etc. In a country as rich as Canada, we have an obligation to provide them with an opportunity and support.

We all have similar hopes, whether we are new immigrants, First Nations, or have been established here for many generations. We

would all like to see our children be happy and to succeed in life.

To accomplish this task, we will need to work together. I invite you now to:

- create opportunities for our children to go into post-secondary
- support and nurture them while they discover their potential, and
- celebrate when they share back with the community.

To quote Bertrand Russell, “One must care about a world one will not see.” Let us work together to nurture these leaders of tomorrow who will shape our future communities. We may not be here to witness those changes, but, we can cheer loudly now, as they dream of what is possible.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for sharing these precious moments with us to celebrate our new beginning. I look forward to building new friendships and serving the Kwantlen Community.

I want to leave you with a quote by Elizabeth Barrett Browning  
“Light tomorrow with today.” Let us do that.

Thank you.